For More Information

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Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

A Brief History of Pueblo Chemical Depot

While we prepare for the future of the depot, we also honor its past. Originally planned to store and provide ammunition when it was constructed in 1942, the depot quickly grew to receive and issue general supplies to support World War II.

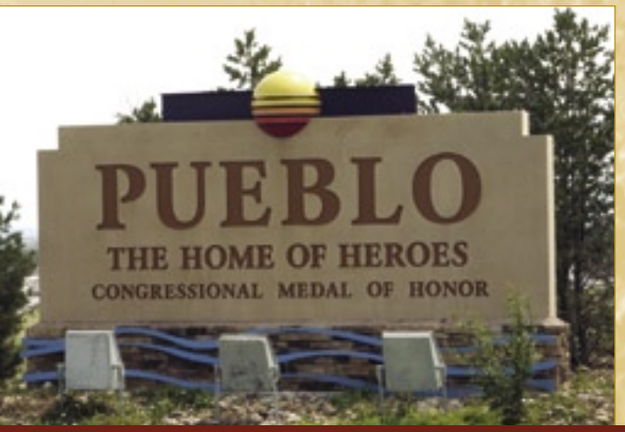
As time marched on, the depot became responsible for renovating and demilitarizing ammunition and maintaining missiles. The depot was in the forefront of support to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, shipping contingency stocks, ammunition and materials to Southwest Asia.

As the depot's missions shifted and expanded over the years, one feature remained constant: the quality and commitment of depot staff—from those who received the first carload of ammunition in 1942 to today's workers who ensure the secure storage of chemical weapons while preparing to return the depot's 23,000 acres to the community. To our dedicated employees—past, present and future—thank you.

PUEBLO CHEMICAL AGENT-DESTRUCTION PILOT PLANT

"The depot has been and continues to be an important part of the Pueblo community—not only in its last mission of the safe, secure storage and destruction of the chemical stockpile entrusted to its care, but to future use of the depot. This step forward is important to the depot workers, past, present and future."

—Lt. Col. John A. Becker
Commander, U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot



Why is the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant important to you?

Our Commitment to Safety

The Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant, or PCAPP, will be built to destroy—safely and efficiently—the stockpile of chemical weapons stored at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot since the 1950s. We will be destroying more than 2,600 tons of mustard agent to eliminate the risk from continued storage.

Our Commitment to Pueblo

The Bechtel Pueblo Team, the systems contractor responsible for the design, construction, systemization, pilot testing, operation and closure of PCAPP, plans to hire 80 to 85 percent of the facility workforce locally. As such, constructing the facility will benefit Pueblo's economy and contribute to community job growth. Sustainable development is critical to the success of the project. With the activities at the depot as a catalyst, citizens of Pueblo are working together on a sustainable development process to plan for opportunities to shape the community's future over the next decade.

Our Commitment to Openness

The Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, the depot and community members worked together to recommend that neutralization followed by biotreatment be used to destroy the Pueblo chemical weapon stockpile. As we prepare to build the facility, our partnership with the community remains the cornerstone of our program. Public involvement is key every step of the way.

How the Technology Works

PCAPP will perform a variety of functions—agent processing, energetics processing, control and storage, munitions storage, biotreatment, entry control, utility, laboratory, personnel maintenance and other support tasks—as it destroys Pueblo's chemical weapons stockpile.

The selected technology—neutralization followed by biotreatment—uses hot water to neutralize the chemical agent, effectively destroying the mustard agent molecules. The resulting hydrolysate is mostly water and thiodiglycol, a common industrial chemical that is readily biodegradable. Ordinary sewage treatment bacteria, or microbes, consume the organics in the hydrolysate. Besides being a common phenomenon in nature, the science of using microbes to help dispose of hazardous waste has existed for decades. Sewage treatment facilities across the country use microbes every day to help break down raw sewage.

The process involves five steps:

1. Removing the energetics
2. Removing the mustard agent
3. Neutralizing the energetics and mustard agent
4. Biotreatment
5. Disposing of the metal parts

Extensively trained, skilled workers and state-of-the-art robotic systems will ensure the safe destruction of the stockpile.

Permitting on the Fast Track

The depot has received a Phase 1 Research Development and Demonstration permit, which allows site civil work to begin, such as clearing, grading, underground utility work, road paving and establishment of construction support areas. Using a phased approach to permitting saves time because we can prepare for construction while we refine the design.

Steps to Success: Facility Life Cycle

Construction and implementation of the facility will progress through several stages:

- Contract award
- Facility design and permitting
- Construction
- Systemization
- Pilot testing
- Operations
- Closure

Partnership for Performance

The Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and support contractor teams work to ensure the chemical weapons destruction project is conducted in the safest, most efficient manner possible.

Bechtel Pueblo Team members include Bechtel National, Inc.; Washington Demilitarization Company; Parsons; and Battelle Memorial Institute. The teaming partners have successfully designed, built and/or operated all the existing chemical weapons destruction facilities in the United States, while adhering to the highest standards of safety, performance and corporate citizenship.